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25. SIGHT RECORD OF POLYPHENIC FORMS OF *APPIAS ALBINA DARADA* C. & R. FELDER (LEPIDOPTERA: PIERIDAE) IN THE NILGIRI BIOSPHERE RESERVE

The Common Albatross *Appias albina darada* C. & R. Felder, protected under Schedule II of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 (Anon. 1990), is one of the most abundant butterflies found at lower elevations in the Western Ghats. The species has a wide geographic range and is distributed almost throughout the Oriental Region (Larsen 1987). Both sexes are usually white, with the forewing having a narrow dark apical and a series of terminal markings. The females usually bear 4 to 5 additional apical white spots on the forewing.

During a recent study on insect diversity of New Amarambalam forests of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve, a few specimens of *A. albina* were collected from the banks of River Karimpuzha at Meenmutti located at an elevation of 650 m during February 2000. The females showed polyphenism and two forms, namely form *semiflava* and form *flava* besides the usual female form were collected. The details of the polyphenic forms recorded are given below.

A. albina darada f. *semiflava*: The underside of the forewing apex and that of the hind wing are yellow, instead of white. Although Wynter-Blyth (1957) states that this form is not rare, only 5 specimens could be collected from Meenmutti in this study. Of these, 3 specimens were collected on 8.ii.2000 and 2 on 9.ii.2000 (Coll. C.F. Binoy). The specimens are deposited in the Kerala Forest Research Institute (KFRI) collections.

A. albina darada f. *flava*: This form is yellow on both the dorsal and ventral side and has been reported to be 'very rare in South India' by Wynter-Blyth (1957). A single specimen

was collected on 9.ii.2000 from the same locality as f. *semiflava*, and is deposited in the KFRI collections (Coll. C.F. Binoy).

Remarks

Occurrence of the polyphenic forms of *A. albina darada* coincided with the population build-up and migration of this species along with the pierids *A. indra shiva* Swinhoe, *A. wardii* Moore and *Cepora nadina remba* Moore in New Amarambalam during February 2000. It was interesting to note that these forms were not observed during rest of the year.

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